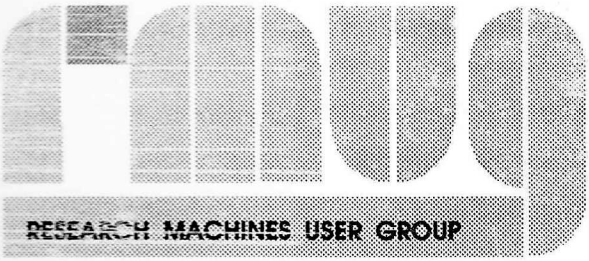
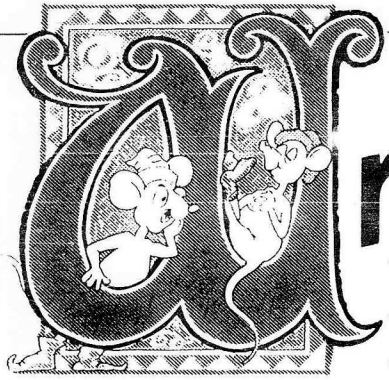
RM User

Volume 6:5





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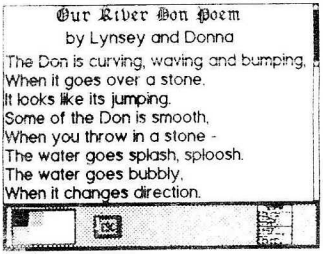
For the beginner . . .


Our River Don Poem
by Lynsey and Donna
The Don is curving, waving and bumping,
When it goes over a stone.
It looks like its jumping.
Some of the Don is smooth,
When you throw in a stone -
The water goes splash, sploosh.
The water goes bubbly,
When it changes direction.

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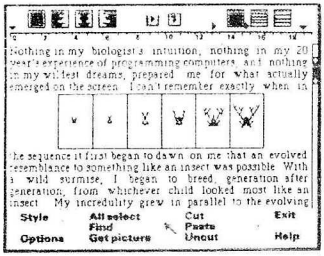
Nothing in my biologist's intuition, nothing in my 20 years experience of programming computers, and nothing in my wildest dreams, prepared me for what actually emerged on the screen. I can't remember exactly when in
the sequence it first began to dawn on me that an evolved resemblance to something like an insect was possible. With a wild surmise, I began to breed, generation after generation, from whichever child looked most like an insect. My incredulity grew in parallel to the evolving
Style
All select
Cut
Exit
Find
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Help Line

According to the constitution the User Group exists *to promote the interchange of information and ideas between users of [RM] microcomputers.* There are two main ways in which this can happen. One of these is by using the magazine as a forum in which letters, articles or just short thoughts can be expressed and shared with other members. The other, and the more immediate, is to use the help line.

The User Group contains a great body of expertise and the Help Line exists as a channel for spreading knowledge and especially answers to your problems.

How does this differ from RM's Customer Support telephone service? Firstly, you can telephone the User Group members in the evening or at weekends when RM is shut (and, of course, you are just bound to hit problems). Secondly, RM don't claim to have great knowledge of products which they don't produce such as Excel or PageMaker. They can tell you how to install the packages on their equipment and how to get started but they cannot be expected to give you in depth support on using the the packages. We, on the other hand, can. Most of the people whose phone numbers are listed on page 42 are using the contents of the educational software library on a daily basis. We may have met exactly the problem you have just encountered.

If you are in difficulty, please feel free to ring anybody on the Committee; John and Helen Williams have an answering machine so you can always leave a message there. It is a great help if you are having a problem doing something using your computer if you can be next to it when you phone because it may then be possible to talk you through a solution over the phone.

If your problem is not urgent, or you think it may be difficult to explain over the phone, then do please write to the Editor with your query. I will either reply to you directly or pass your query on to a better person to solve it or publish your letter in the next magazine as a request for help.

If you have had a problem which you have solved for yourself then please share your knowledge; your solution is quite likely to be useful to someone else, even if you think it is trivial; remember that many of our members are new to using RM equipment.

Finally, you can also telephone Keith Whiddon on 0403 217339 regarding Nimbus problems or Tim Philips on 0284 706233 regarding PC186 or 380z problems. Both numbers are home numbers and we are grateful to Keith and Tim for allowing their numbers to be published.

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News and Editorial

The Training Weekend has now taken place and I think most people there would agree that it was a success; this was the first one that I have been able to attend for some years and I found it very useful. Planning for next year's weekend has already started so it's not too soon to start planning to include it in your budget for next year. At least one person I have spoken to has said that putting it in October means that they can never go. If this is the case for you then write in and suggest a better time; we are always willing to listen to suggestions for alternative times.

On the day the last magazine was posted to you RM announced details of major price cuts for the M Series machines. Most of the M Series machines have come down by up to 25%; a PC286 with 40Mb drive, 2Mb RAM and colour monitor is now just £899 and a similarly specified PC386 costs £999. (This price includes Windows 3 and a mouse and the product carries a three year warranty). RM's prices for standalone machines are now comparable with most other manufacturer's. I'm not so convinced about the prices for network machines; a network station with no floppy or hard drive costs more or less the same as a standalone machine with both drives. I understand that part of the thinking behind this is to move the cost of the Educational Software Library onto each machine so I suppose that this is fairer. It would certainly mean that you could never be in the position of not owning enough licences for the machines that you are running.

My favourite price cut, however, is nothing to do with hardware but is a software package. Corel Draw is now available in a 10 user training pack for £720. (The cheapest price I have seen it advertised anywhere else is £220 for a single copy). This price includes one copy of the software and 20 copies of the training booklets, 10 advanced and 10 introductory. The software is brilliant and being able to buy at this price makes it much better. All I want now is for this to be included in next year's Educational Software Library!

Moving slightly away from high technology, RM are sponsoring an exhibition called "The Making of England" at the British Museum which celebrates Anglo Saxon culture in the period from 597AD to 899 AD. RM are involved not just financially but also by providing a hypermedia display which allows users to browse through information on topics ranging from Digging up London to Monks and Nuns. The systems are PC386 computers running 256 colour Windows and Guide software with touchscreen monitors. The software used was written by Chris Jennings from RM who says that the exhibition is interesting not just because it offers a good way of finding out about the Anglo Saxons but also because it offers an insight into the way in which RM computers can be used to support educational hypermedia.

In similar vein, RM have announced that they will support the Multimedia PC standard which was launched in New York in October. RM will produce two systems; the Presenter and the Author which will surpass the minimum standard laid down.

Each system will include a CD-ROM drive, an audio card with microphone input, synthesiser and mixing facilities, Windows 3 configured for 256 colours and with Multimedia extensions and a multimedia CD-ROM applications disc. Both systems are based on PC 386s, the Presenter system having 2Mb RAM and 40Mb hard disc while the Author has 6Mb of RAM and a 160Mb disc.

At the Training Weekend Roger Whitfield was talking about the National Curriculum Courseware modules which have been developed by ILECC in conjunction with RM. The intention is to provide help in delivering the National Curriculum in English, Maths and Science. The courseware will be included with all new Software Libraries (and is available as a low cost upgrade for existing users). It contains data files, worksheets, pocket guides for the courseware and software and training materials for staff. Barry Taylor from RM describes the modules as the cement which binds together the existing hardware and software in schools. I welcome this launch; I've said many times that the hardest thing to do is to make sure that what we are teaching is relevant; there is no point in just teaching, say, Superbase, just for the sake of it. We need to make sure that what we teach is relevant to other subjects and this seems like a good idea.

RM have also launched a new system aimed at primary schools, the RM Window Box. This is a PC386 with 40Mb disc and 2Mb of memory, including customised versions of Excel and Word for Windows together with Art+Time, RM Logo and BBC Basic. This follows RM's earlier moves to make sure that sufficiently powerful hardware is available in schools at the earliest ages and I hope that the venture is successful.

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Northern Ireland is the location of the largest investigation into the use of notebook or portable computers in schools. 250 children in 9 schools have each been given a computer (One hundred of them are RM NB 100 notebooks loaded with Microsoft Works) to use in their normal lessons for a year; the School of Education at the Queen's University, Belfast is involved in tracking the project to see how they are used. I'll be very interested to see the outcome of this project. We're not yet at the point at which we can afford to give computers to all our pupils (unless you're at a CTC!) but this might be a possibility for the future. The only thing I'm not sure of is whether the pupils get to keep the machines at the end of the year. I suspect there will be a lot of disappointed people if they can't!

I mentioned in the last issue that the new version of Word was on its way; well, it was officially launched at Wembley on 6 November and became generally available two weeks later. What new features does it bring? The key words are Attention to Detail (ATD) and this seems to have been a main theme in the development of this release. Microsoft claim that they have put a lot of effort into making the package easier to use because of their attention to small details and I think that they are right.

There are a number of screen layout changes; for example, the ruler and ribbon are now combined but the only buttons that go missing are the ones to adjust line spacing and paragraph spacing; no great loss. Above the new style ruler is a button bar on which are placed buttons to call up commonly used functions such as File New, Open, Save and Print, the spell checker and many others. You can customise the toolbar, to add or remove buttons so that functions you use are immediately available. There is a wide selection of buttons available, not all of which have immediately obvious functions (there is a Smiley face which looks great fun but I'm not sure what you should attach to it!) If you want functions which are not already available on the menus then, as with Word 1, you can write your own macros and then attach them to buttons. It is now easy to customise menus; the Tools menu has an options setting which allows you to set up almost every aspect of Word in the way you like it.

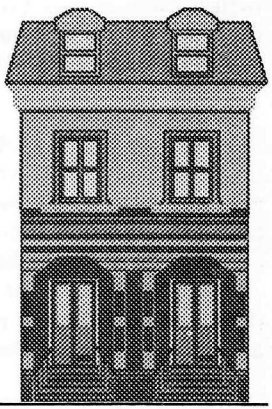
Many of the messages have changed to become more obvious; for example, if you copy a large block of text to the clipboard and then quit in Word 1 you get a message saying Save large clipboard? Compare this with You have placed a large amount of text in the Clipboard. Do you want this text to be available to other applications after Word quits? which is a lot more helpful. An exceptionally useful and yet simple addition is the concept of drag and drop. To move text in most word processors you highlight it in some way and then move the cursor. Finally you give a command to move the text.

With Word 2 you highlight with the mouse, click in the highlight and drag the block to its destination. Dragging with the CTRL key pressed copies the text. Another simple addition is the numbering tool; type some text, highlight it and click the numbering button and all the paragraphs are then numbered. Of course it was possible to number text in Word 1 but it wasn't that easy. A similar tool adds bullets to the text in the same way and this also allows customisation of the bullet to be added; by default it will give a round bullet which will print on most printers but if you have a PostScript printer then the ZapfDingbats font is available in all its glory. Here, however, there seems to be a bug. In the Tools menu you can choose the way in which bullets and numbers are added.

For bullets, you can choose which font to use and then the whole font is shown on screen making it easy to select the bullet you want (I always use square bullets, not just because I like them but because I can remember that small q when formatted as Dingbats prints as a square!). This works fine until you come to view the document when you find that the bullet does not show properly at all but shows as the corresponding letter. Even Windows Write can show bullets properly if you have the Dingbats font installed, PageMaker shows them so why not Word?

The major addition to Word is Object Linking and Embedding (OLE). This allows the insertion of pictures, graphs or other text in a document in such a way that it is linked back to its parent application. For example you can use the Insert Object command to insert an Excel chart. Double clicking on the chart at any time causes Excel to be loaded to edit this chart. Quitting Excel returns the data to Word which updates the picture. If you don't have Excel then it doesn't matter because Word comes with 4 "applets", Graph, Draw, Word Art and Equation Editor. Graph has a mini-spreadsheet in which you can enter data which is then graphed using a graph module which seems the same as that in Excel 3; certainly it offers more than enough facilities for someone who just wants to present data graphically.

Draw is a simple object oriented drawing program, again it's not going to replace anything like Corel Draw but it's more than adequate for adding simple diagrams to a document. The house shown is a piece of clipart created with the program and indicates the kind of work which can be done.



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Equation editor is brilliant - an equation like this might be possible in other word processors but it's certainly not as easy! You are not just restricted maths equations, anything which involves complex sub or superscripts or multiple brackets can be easily handled. Incidentally, I typed this in Word and then placed it in Page Maker. Of course PageMaker knows nothing about Word for Windows files so I had to save it as a Word for DOS file which loses the equation. I copied this to the clipboard and then pasted it in here. In Word it just fits in the right place and everything is easy! Had my copy of Word arrived a few days earlier I would probably have produced the whole magazine using it; maybe the next issue!)

$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

Word Art is just fun. It allows you to take text and manipulate it by stretching, slanting or rotating it in a variety of colours and 20 fonts. You might still need another drawing program but look at this first; it really is powerful and yet, because all it does is manipulate text, it is incredibly easy to use (the manual disposes of it in two pages and it really does not need any more explanation - you can play with it to find out how it works)

Having created an object in the appropriate applet you simply quit and the document is updated with the new object. You can copy objects to any other Windows application and if it supports OLE then simply double clicking will load the applet so that you can edit it further. For example, copying the diagrams above into PageMaker simply inserts them as pictures and you can't do anything with them (apart from cropping or scaling). Copying them to Excel 3, however, embeds them and they can be edited just as they were in Word. I understand that Works for Windows works in the same way. You only need one set of applets; install routines are supposed to check to see if you need to add a new version and only install the applet if it is newer than the one you have. I look forward to further developments in this area. It could be that, for example, PageMaker 5 won't add any functionality in the drawing area but will recognise objects embedded by Microsoft Draw or some other manufacturer's drawing program.

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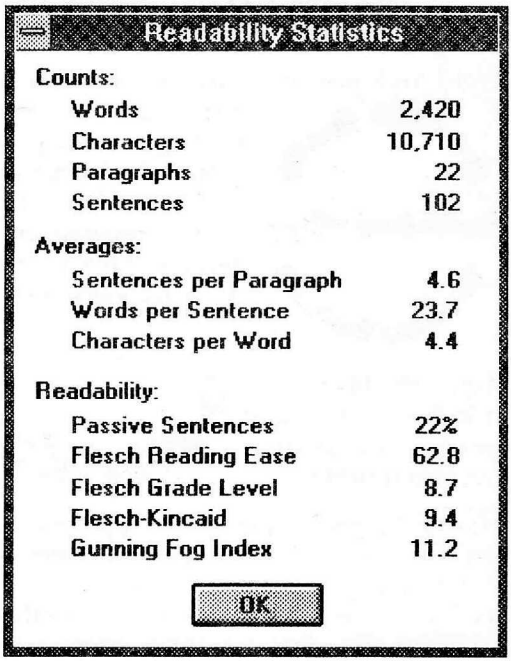
The spell checker seems faster and is certainly more intelligent; if you leave the space out between two words it will normally recognise this and offer the correct spacing as a correction rather than some strange word made from your two words. It can also check multiple languages. You can use the Format Language command to specify the language in which parts of your document are written. I was unable to check how well this works because I only have the English dictionary files. If you mark words as French, for example, the spell checker won't spend ages looking for alternatives for perfect words but will simply warn you that it can't find the French files.

Also on the Tools menu is a grammar checker. This will read through your document and attempt to correct your grammar. It picked out a number of sentences in this section where I agreed with what it said so I corrected my writing but there were a large number of other sentences which it wanted to correct and I didn't. If nothing else, however, it gets you thinking about your writing and it does generally offer explanations for its proposed corrections. At the end of the check you are given some statistics on the readability of your work; these are the figures for this editorial - I'm not sure whether it's good or bad!



The other piece of software I've been looking at this month is Statistics from Blackwell Scientific. This is a Windows application which seems to offer all the statistical calculations you could want. Subjects like Geography and Biology in schools are becoming increasingly reliant on number crunching and tools like this really help. I hope to have a full review in the next issue; in the meantime it costs £95 for a network licence (any size network) and further details are available from Peter Kibby on 0865 791738.

Finally, I've been asked if the magazine will be available on disc; no plans as yet but if you want it then send me a formatted disc and you can have the PageMaker file

Net 3.1 Utilities

Keith Whiddon

I have long held the view that only those network users who actually need access to DOS should be allowed it. Under Net 3.0, the majority of my users ran applications from a blue menu and were logged off when they pressed F9. However, the problem with excluding users from DOS is that they must be provided with alternative ways of performing routine "housekeeping" tasks, such as formatting, copying and deleting. For Net 3.0, I wrote a series of utitity batch files that ran from the blue menu system and this catered for most needs.

At Easter, just when everyone had become used to this set up, RM asked me to field-trial Net 3.1. I was most impressed with this from the start. I particularly like the setting up of the "Restricted" user group - especially when I think of the nightmares I used to have with security under earlier versions of Windows! The Restricted user cannot access applications other than those the manager has provided as icons and does not have access to File Manager or DOS.

That suits me down to the ground - except for the familiar question - "how do Restricted Users perform routine housekeeping tasks?"

Initially I offered my old batch files as icons - but I wasn't particularly happy with this method. At least the old blue menu system could be made to provide the user with a list of files, say on drive A:, so that the filename which they selected, could be passed as a parameter to the appropriate batch file. I decided that what was needed was a simple and "safe" version of File Manager for Restricted users - so I set to work!

Net 3.1 Utilities

"Net 3.1 Utilities" is a standard-looking Windows 3.0 application, running in a maximised window and making full use of colour and animated icons. The PCN1 user has a choice of selecting either their own user area (drive N:) or drive A:, however, the program will detect if the station has twin floppies, allowing the additional choice of drive B:.

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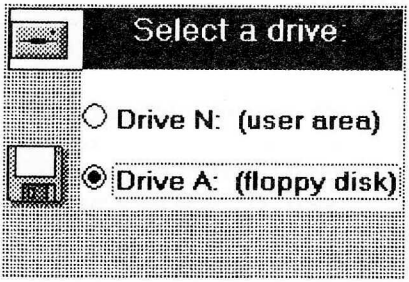
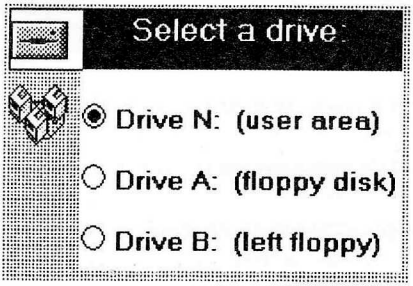


PCN1



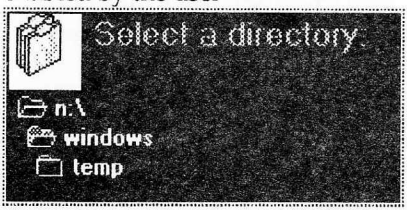
PCN2

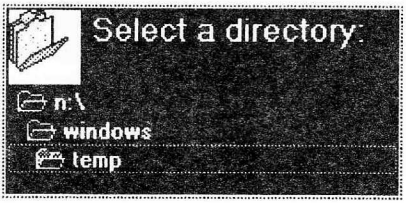
A directory of filenames appears in a separate box and the user can select a file using the mouse. Once selected, the file may be deleted or copied. (Notice the filing cabinet icon!).

No file yet selected.

File "accessor.grp" selected.

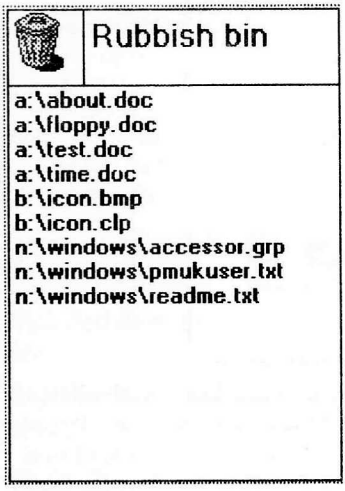
It is possible to select any sub-directories, but this option must first be enabled by the user

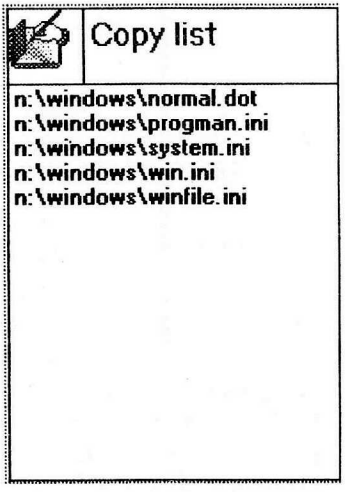




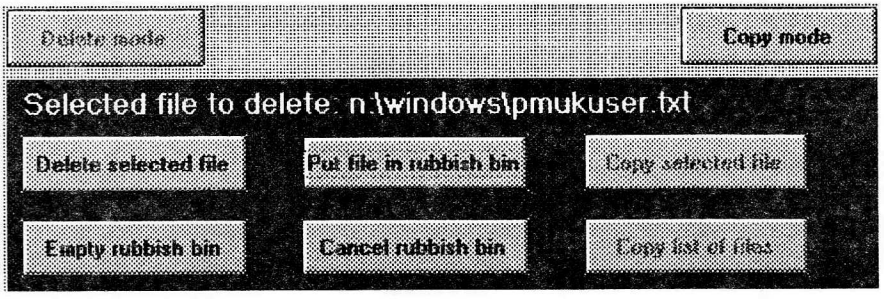
By default, directory box is disabled. This directory box has been enabled.

The system functions in two modes, delete and copy, selectable by large push buttons. In delete mode, it is possible to select and delete individual files, groups of files, or all the files on the selected drive - (there are plenty of warning messages!). Files may be placed in the "rubbish bin" and deleted in one go. It is even possible to build up a list of files from different drives, thus saving time. Copy mode is similar - the rubbish bin turns into the "copy list"! PCN2 users have the option of using drive B: too. In addition, it is possible to back-up a floppy disk.

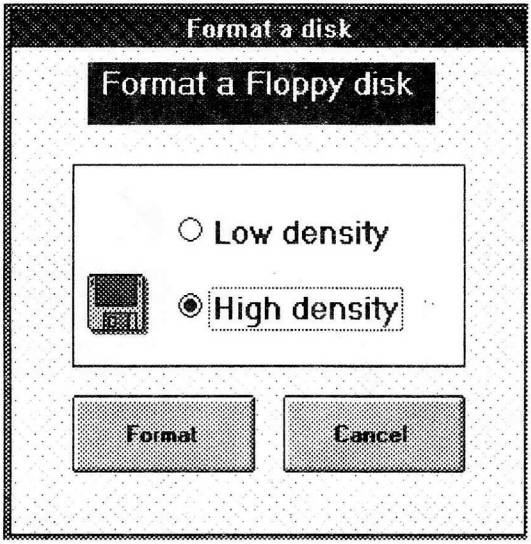




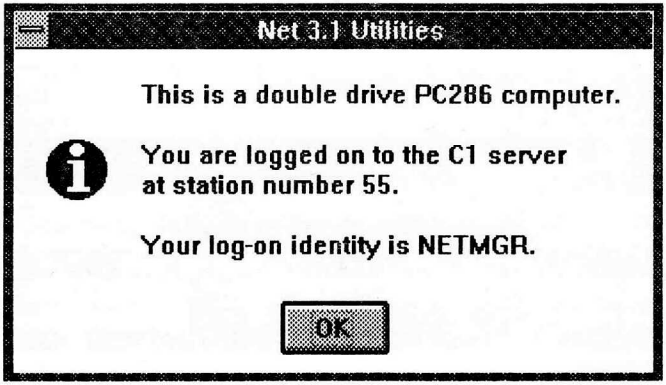
All the above operations may be performed either by using pull-down menus, or by simple push buttons and if you don't have a mouse, it is possible to get by with the keyboard.



It is also possible to format either a low or high density floppy and unlike File Manager, this option is configured to format the disks using the appropriate syntax for the type of RM station being used (and it works on a PC286 - unlike File Manager!!).



The directory of files on the selected drive may be printed out on the default Windows printer, along with the users identity to aid identification! It is also possible to see the current time at the station. A further utility which I find invaluable, displays the type of station being used and its number, the users identity and the name of the current server.


Net 3.1 Utilities
This is a double drive PC286 computer.
You are logged on to the C1 server at station number 55.
Your log-on identity is NETMGR.
OK

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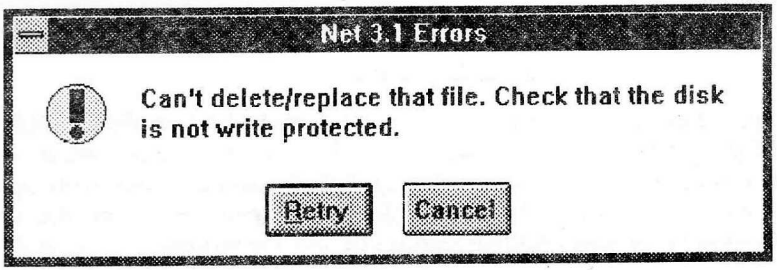
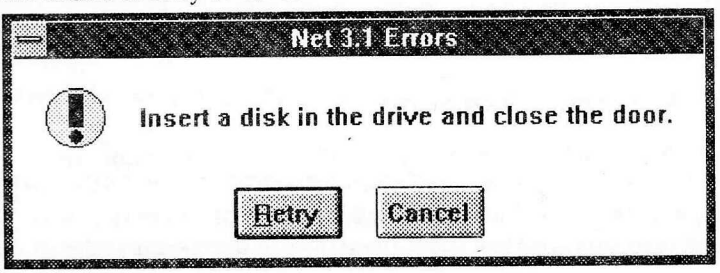


Much work has been done to trap possible errors (Eg. if a disk to be written to is read-only, or if there is no disk in the selected drive) the user being given the choice of retry or cancel.



The way in which the Restricted user group has been set up, means that it doesn't matter if the user deletes all the system files from their user area. Files such as WIN.INI and the Program Manager GRP files, are automatically copied from the GROUPR template the next time they log-on. The program is therefore relatively safe for students to use on the network!

Unfortunately, as it requires Standard or Enhanced Windows modes, the program will not run on PC186s. "Net 3.1 Utilities" is currently being tested in Surrey schools and the response so far is encouraging. A stand-alone version is also available.

If you are interested, do give me a ring on 0932 232402.

Keith Whiddon
Advisory Teacher I.T.
Surrey.

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Useful Tricks with BAT files

Neville Richards

A command of the facilities available through the use of BAT files is an essential for a good network manager, and very useful for those operating stand-alone machines. Later in this article, I shall give some examples of some innovative use of BAT files, but first I want to explain how to get the best from some of the lesser-known features of BAT file writing.

The DOS ERROR LEVEL can be used to great advantage in a number of circumstances. It is a single byte value returned to DOS by a terminiating COM or EXE file. You, the BAT file writer can access this byte by using the IF ERRORLEVEL statement. The syntax for the statement is:

```
IF ERRORLEVEL <number> <statement>

e.g.        IF ERRORLEVEL 7 COPY PIK.DAT Z:
```

A major pitfall which tempts beginners using this statement is to omit to realise that ERRORLEVEL 7 means any value of the DOS ERROR LEVEL of 7 or more. Thus, any BAT file which is testing for a series of values needs to test for the large ones first, and test subsequent ones in decreasing order of magnitude.

Thus `ERRORLEVEL 1` is true in every case except where ERROR LEVEL is zero, and `ERRORLEVEL 0` is always true.

Following the DOS ERROR LEVEL, the use of ENVIRONMENT PARAMETERS is the next port of call. DOS maintains a set of environment parameters which are essentially a set of named text strings. These can be set either from the keyboard or in BAT files by the use of the SET command. The syntax of this command is:

```
SET <string name>=<text string>
e.g.        SET NAME=FRED THE TERRIBLE
```

The environment parameters can be displayed at the console by typing the command SET without any following parts. On a typical RM network, there will be upto 15 environment parameters describing the current network session. Far more important than being able to display environment parameters, they can be used in BAT files in a similar way to the BAT file paramaters %1, %2, etc., to supply text into the BAT commands. To use an environment parameter like this in a BAT file, its name should be sandwiched between two percent characters.

```
e.g.        SET OLDPATH=%PATH%
```

(OLDPATH and PATH now contain the same string)

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e.g. (in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file on the boot disc)

```
SET LOCATION=REGISTRAR'S OFFICE
```

(in a file to invoke Data Ease)

```
SET DENAME=%LOCATION%
```

(DENAME is demanded by Data Ease)

The use of BAT file parameters as future commands is a trick I have used to good effect on a number of occasions. A BAT file can be made to hand over control to another BAT file (not known to the original writer) by using one of the original paramaters as a command.

e.g. Here is a BAT file (called RAG.BAT) which expects two parameters, the first being a file to be operated on by a standard command, the second being a further command chosen by the user who invokes the BAT file, not by its original writer.

```
RESIZE %1
%2
```

Thus a call of the file by:

```
RAG FRED.DOC NEXTONE
```

will cause firstly a RESIZE FRED.DOC, followed by the command NEXTONE (which may be a COM, EXE, or BAT file itself).

I have made extensive use of this type of BAT file in a number of areas of network management.

Examples

The following example is our standard PRINTER SELECTION routine. It will select a printer on any available server, SET standard environment parameters indicating to following routines the name and location of the printer selected, and then invoke a follow-on routine.

```
echo off
cls
rem GPRINTER server printer follow password

rem %1 is the server name
rem %2 is the printer name
rem %3 is the name of
rem next command

if $%1==$ goto error1
if $%2==$ goto error2
if $%printer%==$LOCAL goto loc
if $%printer%==$ goto noname
echo Disconnecting %printer% on %pserv%.
```

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```
:noname
use prn: /d
:loc
if $%2==$LOCAL goto local
if $%2==$local goto local
echo Connecting %2 on %1.
use prn: \\%1\%2 %4
if errorlevel 1 goto error3
echo Selected %2 on %1.
set pserv=%1
set printer=%2
set ppass=%4
goto end

:local
set pserv=
echo Selected LOCAL printer.
set printer=LOCAL
set ppass=
goto end

:error1
echo No printer server given.
goto end

:error2
echo No printer name given.
goto end

:error3
echo Cannot connect to %2 on
%1.
set pserv=
set printer=LOCAL
set ppass=

:end
%3
```

It can often be useful to have actions dependent upon the location of a terminal on the network. Such as: all terminals in Lab A should connect to PRINTER A, and so on. My best solution to this problem was to write a very short COM file which leaves the terminal number as the DOS ERROR CODE when it terminates. Thus, if terminals in LAB A all had numbers less than 50, and those in LAB B had numbers greater than 50, appropriate printers could be set by:

```
ADDRERR
rem ADDRERR.COM leaves the terminal number
rem             as DOS ERROR LEVEL
IF ERRORLEVEL 50 GPRINTER SERVER1 EPSONLQ SETUPFIN
GPRINTER SERVER2 STAR SETUPFIN
```

A following routine SETUPFIN.BAT will be invoked, whatever printer is connected.

IBM Mode etc.

It seems very wasteful of intellectual effort to find that every BAT file designed to run mode-sensitive software contains an incomprehensible tangle of calls to CHKMODE.EXE and IF ERRORLEVEL statements. The prospect which faces anyone trying to write BAT files to manage new software is either to reproduce this mess, or to find a more reasonable alternative. We at Melton Mowbray College have chosen the latter. What we now have is a set of just three BAT files which handle all our mode changing.

The principle is simple: a file SETIBMM.BAT uses CHKMODE.EXE to establish what sort of machine it is running in, and what the current mode is.

A major change for the company last year was the shift of status from RM LTD to RM plc. As no company can trade as both simultaneously the change must take place instantaneously. It so happened that RM was in the middle of a country-wide mail shot at the critical time so some despatches had to carry one description and, the next day, carry the new one.

Meanwhile, the seminars continued satisfactorily although, rather disconcertingly, an item that tended to draw a disproportionate amount of interest was not made by RM. It was the OHP tablet used to throw the computer display onto a projector screen. In case you are interested, the colour version costs far more than a computer: about £3500.

A rationalisation of rôles at headquarters brought school administration computers under the schools umbrella. One of Barry's most important contracts in the past year was to install administration hardware and software (SIMS) in every Northern Ireland secondary school. This huge undertaking has been in progress for many months.

In January a few more price cuts were announced. The primary sector was beginning to grow rapidly and turnkey systems were under development. The new idea being that LEAs could request their own 'menus' and systems would be delivered to their schools ready to run.

In the spring the LEA advisers reiterated the value they placed on RM's policy of bundling top quality software with each server. Barry was in contact with NCET about CD ROMs and their educational uses. At BETT a prototype portable (notebook) was to be seen by anyone who could wriggle behind the screens. Barry even found time to visit some schools about this time.

In May the notebook was out - most advisers had one to test. A new, consistent pricing scheme had been installed and Chris Jennings was beginning a series of awareness sessions on multimedia systems that RM was developing.

Another major contract that RM obtained in the summer was to re-equip all secondary school in Kuwait.

At the beginning of the financial year about 10% of RM's personnel were in Customer Services. By the end this had risen to 20%. A fact that particularly pleased Barry and, he hoped, would please us.

This report of Barry's address was produced by Ken Maynard.

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A further BAT file ORIGINAL.BAT is invoked by all our software BAT files to restore the machine to its native mode.

```
echo off
chkmode
if errorlevel 5 goto end
if errorlevel 4 goto setpc
if errorlevel 2 goto xmode
goto end

:setpc
setpc off
goto end

:xmode
xmode ibm

:end
%1 %2 %3 %4 %5
```

The Default Drive Problem

Much has been written about setting the environment parameter DD (the default drive) to the current drive letter, in order that the drive may be restored after software has completed. I have tried a number of ways of solving this problem, and think the following is about the best.

I have written a small program PATHID.EXE which creates and writes a BAT file SETPID.BAT on the default drive. An example of its contents is:

```
echo off
set rp=A:\BAT
set cp=A:\BAT
set rd=A:
set cd=A:
set cid=RM1_077_S_RICHA
%1 %2 %3 %4 %5 %6 %7 %8 %9
```

When this is invoked, a number of environment variables are set. The abreviations are:

```
rp    required path     cp    current path
rd    required drive    cd    current drive
cid   current ID
```

It will be noted that SETPID.BAT has as its last line the set of parameters %1 onwards which means that it can be used to invoke further BAT files or commands. Although in the example above, the required values are identical to the current values, required values would be set on the basis of the parameter used with PATHID.EXE.

In the case above, no parameter had been supplied.

As an example, consider that we are logged onto drive T, and wish to run software operating on drive N, but would like to be returned to drive T afterwards. So, SOFT would be invoked with the command:

```
SOFT N: FRED
```

SOFT.BAT might read:

```
PATHID %1
SETPID SOFT1 %2
```

The SETPID.BAT generated would look like:

```
echo off
set rp=N:\
set cp=T:\
set rd=N:
set cd=T:
set cid=RM1_077_S_RICHA
%1 %2 %3 %4 %5 %6 %7 %8 %9
```

When it is invoked, it sets appropriate environment variables and goes on to invoke SOFT1.BAT which might read:

```
%RD%
CD %RP%
CD P:\SOFT
P:SOFT %1
rem       has used required path as typed by user
CD P:\
%CD%
rem       has returned to original drive
CD %CP%
rem       and path
```

I have noticed a small problem with WINDOWS 3 Bat file on NET3 as distributed by RM. There is a use made of the environment parameter UDRIVES which seems to assume that there is just one user drive. If a user has more than one, then the environment parameter TEMP is set to an impossible value. PATHID.EXE would solve that problem.

I hope that the foregoing will have helped a few more people to become more confident in the use of BAT files. The two programs described (ADDRERR.COM and PATHID.EXE), together with all BAT files displayed or mentioned are available from me at a nominal price of £1 to cover media and postage costs.

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RM User Group 14th Annual Training Weekend

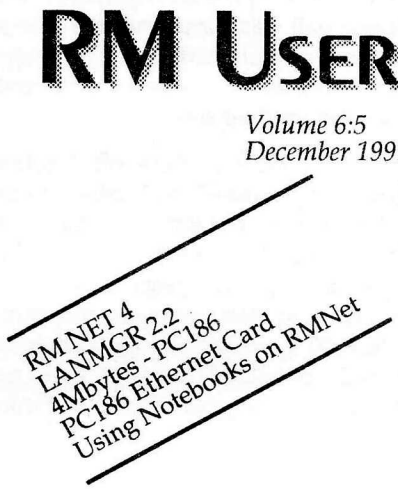
Helen Williams

Thank you to all the RM User Group members who attended our 14th Annual Training Weekend. I hope that you all returned home with some extra nuggets of knowledge, whether it was a large Superbase Training Manual or a quick tip in the bar on how to make your Network run just that bit faster. Also thanks to the RM Team who worked hard all weekend, putting on courses, answering awkward questions and one group going for the world record in network servers per square foot. An extra special thank you to RM and Barry Taylor for donating the RM Notebook for the best set of answers to Les Watson's fiendish quiz.

The User Group reporting team has has been hard at work to provide an in depth view of the weekend's courses and we shall be contributing a series of articles to the User Group Magazine. Do let me know if there are any courses, themes or other events you would like to see at your 1992 Training Weekend.

Helen Williams is the RM User Group Treasurer and Training Weekend Organiser and our thanks go to her the enormous amount of work she put into organising the weekend.

One of the Weekend's courses concerned Design; one of the exercises was to produce a cover for the magazine. The one reproduced below is particularly interesting for the contents suggested; I hope that the articles mentioned will soon appear!



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The 14th Annual Training Weekend - a delegate's view

Ken Maynard

The recent RM User Group training weekend looked like being a most productive time the moment the invitations arrived in the post. I had a say in the very earliest plans during my final year on the committee but changes had been made to take account of recent developments and to suit members' requests.

The shape of things to come became more apparent on arrival at Woolley Hall, a large attractive country house in the middle of farmland between Barnsley and Wakefield. The reception area was full of conference materials and publishers' handouts and, soon, with delegates clasping cups of tea. Three large work rooms gradually filled with networked machines loaned in amazing quantity by generous establishments. In a fourth room every machine was a server, brought by individuals to the conference like animals being taken to see a vet. RM technical support had promised to help network managers to get the most from their systems and to conduct a general surgery. Also around was a stack of RM notebooks that could be borrowed for the weekend by those insomniacs who feel they have to compute all through the night.

The weekend did not disappoint. All the sessions took place as advertised and everyone had a chance to get answers to their particular problems in the work rooms, over meals or in the bar. The event had proved to be so attractive that more delegates applied than could be accommodated in the centre itself. Consequently sleeping arrangements were made at a local hotel for a few and the dining hall was supplemented with some tables in the reception area. The Woolley Hall staff were most helpful in this and every other respect and the delegates were able to concentrate the whole while on the real reasons for giving up their time.

The money, time and effort put in by Research Machines themselves was outstanding and particularly valued. At least seven of their staff attended for most of the time. Of course it is too late to encourage you to attend this year's event but I suggest you book early for the next one. I cannot see how you could hope to get such intensive, relevant and cheap in-service training anywhere else. Also, write to Helen or to the magazine to make suggestions for the contents of the 1992 weekend. It greatly helps the organisers to be able to concentrate on the details of the courses and not to have to worry about a possible shortage of delegates causing last minute alterations to the timetable.

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Keynote Address Friday, October 25, 1991

The Rôle of a Marketing Manager

(Given by Barry Taylor: Research Machines Schools' Marketing manager)

Barry felt that the term 'marketing' is not properly understood by customers and felt it would help those present to appreciate some of the behind-the-scenes work of RM if we knew more of the scope of his job. To demonstrate its diversity he took us through the principal tasks with which he was involved over the past year.

Firstly, he assured us that he has good credentials to be allowed to address an audience composed mainly of teachers. He taught for some time in both the state and private sector and was a customer of RM and a writer of systems software for networks before joining them in 1989. In other words, he really used to be 'one of us'. He even subscribed to the User Group and had attended a conference.

The RM year begins in October (because no-one else's does) and Barry began the 1990 one by visiting several SEMERCs to assess their computing needs. Meanwhile, at headquarters, portables were under discussion, although no final proposals were being made. The marketing department initiated a plan to conduct one thousand seminars during the coming year covering the length and breadth of the country.

In November Barry visited the Marplan conference to see how they could help the company focus its marketing and decided to commission a telephone survey. You can blame Barry for at least one of those phone calls that begin: 'Sir, could you spare five minutes to answer a few questions?' He found that RM users read a great variety of newspapers; in fact all the nationals bar one. The most commonly read educational computer magazine is *Acorn User*, with *Educational Computing* second and *RM User* eighth. He also discovered the interesting fact that the final arbiter in school computer purchasing decisions is the LEA adviser, the headteacher AND the I.T. coordinator! It actually depends on who you are talking to at the time.

Still in November, the planned catalogue proved to be running late so, creatively renaming it the December issue, he tried to impress readers with RM's new-found promptness. It was particularly welcome when it came, however, because it contained some considerable price cuts. Also, after much infighting between RM departments, he was able to announce that mice would at last be bundled with all desktop machines. Something he, and we, had wanted for some time.

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It then uses either SETPC.EXE or XMODE.EXE to set the mode, and the hands over control to a software specific BAT file to invoke the software.

```
rem                  SETIBMM.BAT
rem
rem Ensures that machine is in IBM Monochrome Mode and
rem       invokes next Bat file.
rem Either SETPC.EXE or XMODE.EXE will be used
rem          depending on machine.
rem
echo off
chkmode
if errorlevel 7 goto badcm
if errorlevel 5 goto ibm
if errorlevel 4 goto setpc
if errorlevel 2 goto xmode
if errorlevel 1 goto setpc
rem note errorlevels checked in descending order
goto badcm

:ibm
%1 %2 %3 %4 %5
rem Provided %1 was specified, and %1.bat or
rem        %1.exe or %1.com exists, then
rem command %1 will be invoked with parameters %2 %3 %4
rem               and %5,
rem otherwise, next line finishes process.
goto end

:setpc
setpc /m
if errorlevel 1 goto badcm
%1 %2 %3 %4 %5
goto end

:xmode
xmode IBM
%1 %2 %3 %4 %5
goto end

:badcm
echo Cannot put this machine into IBM mode
:end
```

So, if a given item of software called SOFT requires IBM mode (monochrome), then SOFT.BAT would contain the lines:

```
ECHO OFF
SETIBMM SOFTZ %1 %2 %3 %4 %5
```

After obtaining IBM mode appropriately, control is passed to SOFTZ.BAT which contains all the usual commands to invoke SOFT.

Two other BAT files: SETIBMC.BAT and SETRM.BAT perform the equivalent process for colour and RM modes.

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Advanced Excel

Course presented by Peter Smith

Excel was highly recommended by Peter when he described how he had been a user since 1987 and now uses it in his business. He uses Excel regularly as one of his management tools, for the payroll, graphical presentations, invoices and accounts. In fact all his accounts had been done with Excel until recently.

The 'class' was invited to suggest areas of particular interest, producing a list which included topics such as:

extracting data, macros, sheet management (windowing), presentation, graphs and linking.

The session was in two halves separated by tea. During the first half the group concentrated on macros and linking sheets. We were introduced to some of the procedures and commands and then invited to experiment. Actually the word 'play' was the one used! It was a salutary experience, finding oneself in the kind of situation that is presented to our pupils every day. Several members of the group felt others were making much better progress than themselves, however surely it cannot be possible for **everyone** to do better than **everyone** else...

Eventually I achieved a set of mark sheets linked to a summary sheet.

After tea we returned with renewed energy and learnt about extracting data and graphical presentation. Some more 'play' followed - certainly I finished the afternoon knowing much more about Excel and its potential.

The course was very useful - many thanks to our helpful, patient teacher. Now comes the problem of remembering all the hints now that we are back home. Fellow group members may be interested to know of the instruction booklet produced by Item, a useful aid which fills the gap between the beginner and the person who needs the full manual. It is called Excel (Title code 3404) and costs £5.00 (100 or more guides £4.50 each), from:

The Sales Department, ILECC, John Ruskin Street, LONDON, SE5 0PQ.

This report was produced by Sheila Maynard

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NMS - Netlog-MCB Menu

Richard Naylor(Methodist College Belfast) and Richard Horton (EdHItec)

Edhitec is distributing these network utilities prepared for and by Richard Naylor for use at his own college. Richard Horton introduced each item explaining the reasons behind its creation and the philosophy used in its design. This was in no way a sales-pitch, Richard Naylor spoke of each without dwelling unduly on the significant advantages over RM's offerings.

NMS (Network Management System)
This is an alternative to (X)NETMAN, it offers as standard:

- ❑ the ability to import users from a comma delimited file.
- ❑ random generation of passwords.
- ❑ output of group lists in report form.

This is achieved at the same time as compiling USERS.NET faster than (X)NETMAN. (See Steve Rochford's comments in RM User 6.4)

Netlog
This does what RM have never tried to do, record all users of the network in a dBASE compatible database. One Log-on and one Log-off program record these events in a common file. An analysis program gives screen or printed reports of usage, illegal exits, average log-on times and station usage.

MCB Menu
This is the utility which probably has the least future as the Windows 3 front-end is likely to eclipse it. It does however show what could have been done with the standard blue-menu system. By separating the display part of the menu from the program launching shell, it has proved possible to write a shell small enough to run Windows within it. Memory is saved by allowing the display part of the menu to be overwritten by the program being run. This is of course at the expense of having to reload this part when quitting the program. This may still generate some sales of this product as it offers (as far as I can discover) the only alternative to the DOS prompt for anyone who wants to choose the mode in which they run Windows 3, or indeed which version of Windows they run. Other attractions offered by the menu system are:

- ❑ password protected options (eg. shell to DOS)
- ❑ *Optional* pause before returning to the menu.

This report was produced by John Williams

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Netlog

Phillip Fox

This is a management utility which consists of a number of programs. The main one is LOG.EXE which is run as a log on and log off option for any or all users or groups. When combined with RM Net 3.x[1] it can also be set only to run on machines with certain addresses or machines of certain types.

The effect of running this program is to provide a large (DBASE compatible) data file of all the selected users' log ons and log offs. This data file can then be interrogated from the network manager's area with the supplied NETLOG program. Analysis of the data can be in the NETLOG program or any package capable of reading DBF files (e.g. DBASE, EXCEL, DATAEASE etc.).

Installation of the set of files is straightforward and the help file which is provided is simple to follow, essentially the installation involves:-

1. the copying of the program files onto the file server(s) by typing INSTALL from the floppy disc;
2. then the setting up an offer to store the log file in NETMAN (or equivalent). *Skip this section if ITEM MAIL is already running on the server;*
3. setting the log on and log off programs for the users/groups to be monitored;
4. finally resetting the file server(s) for the changes to take effect.

As the log file grows with each log on and log off that is being monitored it is worth restricting the monitoring to either a number of machines or users/groups, as the data soon becomes meaningless.

NETLOG performs two tasks. Firstly it updates the database file from the log file. Secondly it allows a network manager to:-

- ❑ look at summary statistics of users or stations;
- ❑ look at a full report of all users;
- ❑ to browse the database in full or just those entries which match either a station address or a user identity.

It also allows the data file to be cleared out and a monthly database created

1. See the RM Net 3 Network Managers Guides, Pages 99,100 Advanced Logon Program Management.

.This database provides an excellent method of producing hard copy of those users who have logged out without properly exiting the system. Or of monitoring the system so as to identify which users were logged in prior to (those occasional) system crashes.

As well as the LOG and NETLOG programs the latest version comes with a pair of useful programs called WHO and WHOMNGR although their usefulness is limited if not all users/stations are being monitored.

WHO provides a simple listing of who is logged on and at which station number (with an option to list the description of the station if required; see WHOMNGR below). This utility will not recognise if a person has left a machine without logging off correctly, so take its information with a pinch of salt if you have naughty users.

WHOMNGR allows you to assign a description to match a station address, very useful if like me you can never remember where a particular station address is. (Not so useful when the computers have been to the RM User Group Training Weekend and all gone back to slightly different places!!)

All in all a very useful set of utilities at £29.50 from Edhitec on 0423 871027.

I've just started using NETLOG and find it quite useful; I'm particularly interested in finding which machines are used most and least so that they can be redistributed to areas of need. Phill mentions the idea of restricting the monitoring to certain stations; you need either to do this or to clear the log file regularly because the datafile becomes too huge to make sense if you don't. This is not a criticism of the program; more a reflection of the business of the network.

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Two utilities for Logo

John Marsh

Slow Logo

For those of you who remember Logo on the 480Z Nimbus Logo must always have seemed very fast, but this can have disadvantages if pupils need to see the turtle actually drawing something, as I discovered recently when colleagues from the Maths department began investigating 'RecurringWorms' using Logo. (Ask a mathematician if this is a mystery to you!)

For this investigation pupils really need to be able to see the turtle as it is drawing rather than the finished product almost as soon as they press the Enter key.

Many years ago, using the old Nimbus Logo, I had written some procedures to slow the turtle down and after much searching amongst old disks I resurrected them.

The new Logo is a bit more particular about syntax so they needed tweaking a bit to work.

I included them in the START.LGC file so that they would be invisible to any users.

To use them you must edit your START.LGC file and include the following at the end just before the lines:-

```
say []
say [Logo is now ready....]
```

The new definitions are split into separate parts for those who wish to study them.

Those sections which begin with 'define' must be typed as one continuous part without pressing the Enter key.

When you now run Logo two new commands are available, SLOW and FAST, Slow to make the turtle run slow and Fast to revert to normal speed.

Also near the end is a small section which defines F, B, L, R as FD 10, BK 10, LT 10 and RT 10. This is not a new idea but has been used by many teachers in Primary schools when introducing Logo and not wishing to use numbers initially.

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```
make 'slow 0

define [[goslow] [expose [sfd sbk slt srt]] [define [[sfd 'n] [if eqq :n
0 [stop]] [$fd 1 sfd :n-1]]] [ define [[sbk 'n] [if eqq :n 0 [stop]]
[$bk 1 sbk :n-1]]] [define [[slt 'n] [if eqq :n 0 [stop]] [$lt 1 slt :n-
1]]] [define [[srt 'n] [if eqq :n 0 [stop]] [$rt 1 srt :n-1]]] [alias
'sfd 'fd]  [alias 'sfd 'forward] [alias 'sbk 'bk] [alias 'sbk 'backward]
[alias 'slt 'lt] [alias 'slt 'left] [alias 'srt 'rt] [alias 'srt 'right]
[bury [sfd sbk slt srt]]]

define [[slow] [if :slow = 0 [make 'slow 1 goslow say [Slow LOGO now
ready]]]]

define [[fast] [if :slow = 1 [expose [fd bk lt rt forward backward left
right]  scrap [fd bk lt rt forward backward right left] bury [sfd sbk
slt srt] make 'slow 0 say [Fast LOGO now ready]]]]
bury [slow fast goslow]

define [[setup] [define [[sfd] [fd]]] [define [[sbk] [bk]]] [define
[[slt] [lt]]] [define [[srt] [rt]]]]

setup
bury [setup]

define [[f] [fd 10]]
define [[b] [bk 10]]
define [[l] [lt 10]]
define [[r] [rt 10]]
bury [f b l r sfd sbk slt srt]

gc
say [Type slow for Slow mode]
say [Type fast to undo slow]
```

Music Logo

Many versions of Logo on other machines include Music so for those not wishing to feel left out the following allows very simple music to be played in Nimbus Logo.

It has been written in MASM following a similar style to many Logo extensions such as printer and turtle drivers. It uses the sub-bios to call sound routines built into the Nimbus.

For those wishing to use it I have asked for it to be included in the User Group Library, both as source code and as an assembled module ready for use.

Having assembled this in MASM the steps to convert it into a Logo Driver are detailed in the Nimbus Logo manual.

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The Logo driver SOUND.LGX provides Logo users with 3 commands to play music/sounds from Logo.

The driver should be loaded in the usual way;-BLOAD 'SOUND.LGX and then the commands then available are:-

NOTE pitch1 pitch2 duration

```
NOTE 148 196 3000
```
which plays a note from middle C to the next C in 3 seconds.

```
NOTE 196 148 3000
```
which plays a note with descending pitch.

Pitch can range from 1 to 388. Duration is in 1/1000 secs.

SOUND pitch1 pitch2

```
SOUND 148 184
```
which plays a note from middle C to the next A but uses the Envelope you define by the next command.

ENVELOPE AT AV DT DV ST SV RT

```
ENVELOPE 0 20000 2000 15000 2000 10000 3000
```
which defines an envelope of your choosing.

This uses the standard convention for envelope design with:-

```
AT - Attack time in 1/1000 secs
AV - Volume at end of attack, 0 to 32767
DT - Decay time
DV - Volume at end of decay
ST - Sustain time
SV - Volume at end of sustain
RT - Release time
```
The default Envelope is:- ENVELOPE 0 20000 2000 20000 0 0 0

Note:- If on running this no sound is heard then you will need to run the Config program to turn the sound on in your machine.

P.S. Just days before sending the above to RM User we received a new server at school with all the latest software including an update to Logo which now includes SOUND! Fortunately though it is very different from the above so I hope it is still of interest.

Logo often seems to be forgotten or ignored but I think that it still has an important place in education; I'd like to hear more from readers about what they do with Logo.

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Putting it all together

Mastering most of the elements of Pagemaker is a matter of practising some new manual skills and learning your way around the menus. The best practice you can get is to use the skills you already have for a job that you must do. (Choose a job with a reasonable deadline.)

- ❑ Start by "thinking through" the page layout, it might help to draw it roughly in pencil, and look at examples of similar documents to find styles that you like.
- ❑ Remember there is no compulsion to use all of the bells and whistles built into Pagemaker. Good design is often the most simple.
- ❑ Collect together the files for any text or graphics to be placed into the publication and copy them to one directory.
- ❑ As Pagemaker creates large files it is useful to keep one directory in which your current work takes place, this can then be archived to floppy disk when the job is finished.

Style
This could be a course in its own right. The basic message is:-

- ❑ Choose a style for each job, department, company.....
- ❑ Keep it straightforward.
- ❑ Stick to it!

Printers.
Although Pagemaker can output to dot-matrix printers, for commercial quality one of the following will be required.

- ❑ Laser printer with downloaded fonts.
- ❑ POSTSCRIPT printer.
- ❑ Electronic typesetter.

Laser Printer encompasses all printers which produce their output via a photocopier drum/developer system. The laser is a method of exposing the photosensitive drum and may be replaced by, LED or LCD arrays which perform the same task. A more accurate name for the familly is PAGE printers.

POSTSCRIPT is a page description language written by Adobe Systems who declared it Public Domain software. The language may be freely used by anyone, however the Adobe range of fonts and their PostScript interpreter remain copyright. Cheaper PostScript printers have fonts which are sufficiently different not to infringe copyright. They may also have an interpreter written by their manufacturer, but this should make no difference. PostScript printers are usually laser(page) printers but it is possible that ink-jet printers may be used for PostScript output particularly for colour work.

Electronic typesetters are the big brother of laser printers. They work to much higher resolution (at least 1200 dots per inch.), usually accept paper up to A2 or A1 and have a dedicated computer to drive them. They all use a page description language, usually PostScript and have a vast selection of type faces.

Implications of Desk Top Publishing.
To a new user setting out to master Pagemaker, DTP may seem to be a wonderous new toy. To the publicity manager of a large corporation it looks like a whole load of problems.

Most companies, particularly large ones have an established "Corporate Style", documents going out which don't conform to this style can undermine efforts to make customers "aware" of the company.

Where DTP is being considered within a large organisation some decisions need to be made:-

- ❑ Can the existing house style be reproduced through DTP. If it can't is it the right time for a review?
- ❑ Who decides the degree of flexibilty permitted?
- ❑ Should some fonts be removed from the directory?
- ❑ Can "template" files be provided for the various standard documents?
- ❑ Should someone be nominated to vet output? If so can they do it fast enough to preserve the time benefits of DTP?

I found this article in the directory which contained all the shareware etc that was being swapped at the Training Weekend; I assume it was intended for publication but I don't know who wrote it; would the author please contact me!

Troubleshooting

David Taylor

Introduction

- ❑ A methodical approach will always pay off.
- ❑ If you have an intermittent fault, keep a log of when the problem occurs, which stations are affected, what was being done at the time and by whom.
- ❑ If there is nothing wrong with the hardware your users may be at fault.
- ❑ Regular backups will give you a working network to go back to if anything goes wrong.

The Server

- ❑ Start up the server with no floppy disk in the drive.
  1. An AX, VX, AX/2 or VX/2 should give you a logon screen. Check that you have MS-DOS 4.01.
  2. Check that the list of drives corresponds to your hardware.
- ❑ Run CHKDSK /F. If the server has been switched off with any files still open you will be prompted to convert lost chains to files. Y <Enter> will create files FILE????.CHK containing the lost information, N <Enter> will free up the space.
- ❑ Run XVERIFY. If it shows any errors not known to MS-DOS you will have to (back-up and) re-format that disk (e.g. FORMAT C: /s) and may need further maintenance.
- ❑ Run NETSET. Check the network address.
  1. On X-Series check the Z-Net parameters and memory options.
- ❑ Start up the server from the Network start-up disk.
  1. Watch for any error messages.
  2. Check that a list of SHAREs appears on the screen.
  3. Check the parameters in the last few lines of the STATUS display are correct for your network.
  4. Check that the server is booting the correct type of stations, look on the server STATUS screen.

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Network Cabling

❑ Indirect checks

1 Watch the server go through its normal startup up, see that the server doesn't pause at RMNETB.EXE for too long.

2 Switch the stations on and watch the server's Winchester or Network activity light.

❑ Physical checks

1 Are there any obvious breaks in the network?

2 Is there a terminator at each end of the cable?

3 Are all stations connected directly to the cable with a T-piece, with no spurs off the main route?

❑ Electrical check

Remove the terminator from the each end of the network. The impedance between the central pin and the outer layer should be 50 ohms.

Cable faults

The major cause of faults on networks are the connections.

Stations

❑ Are some stations reaching the "Network" screen? If they are not, there is something wrong with the server or the cabling.

❑ Is this station reaching the "Network" screen? If it is not, check the T-piece. If the station has a floppy drive, run NETSET to check the boot device and boot server address.

❑ Are users able to log on at any other station with the same user ID as the one you are trying? If not, run (X)NETMAN on the server to check the password, connections, log-on and log-off options for that user ID.

❑ Do two stations have the same address? Check the address of ALL the stations on the network. If there are two the same you may get the "Failed to connect" message, but only when both stations are switched on.

Printers

- ❑ Does the printer work correctly when the server is in stand-alone mode? Run (X)CONFIG (serial printer in the Printer socket) to match parameters. If in doubt, try 8 data and 2 stop bits.
- ❑ Does the problem only show itself on long documents? If so, it may be a handshaking problem - check the printer cable.
- ❑ Does the problem only show itself with some applications? Most programs allow you to install a **printer driver** - check that the correct one has been selected. Sometimes you also need to specify the page length - check that this is the same as the printer's page/form length (which should, in turn, match the paper that you are using).
- ❑ Is text printed correctly, even though graphics are not? If you have a parallel printer, check it has an **8-bit cable**.

These notes are extracted from the Advanced Network Management course which David ran at the Training Weekend; I think that this section is likely to be of use to most network managers who suddenly find themselves with a network which was once working perfectly and has now stopped. If you want to know what the rest of the course contained then you need to book an course with Research Machines; most people seem to find the course very useful.

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Contact Steve Rochford on 081 741 1851 (home) or 081 740 5642 (school)

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Writing for the Magazine

I welcome submissions for the magazine from anyone. You don't have to be a great writer to send something in; send a letter or a short tip for the Hints and Tips pages, everything is welcome.

This issue carries some reports on the Annual Training Weekend. If you were there and you would like to report your views, then please let me have them as soon as possible. Alternatively, if you could not make it then it would be useful if you write to me to let me know what subjects you would like to see covered in next year's Weekend.

I'd also like articles on your ideas for the future; what direction do you think we should be moving in with our use of computers? Controversial articles are always welcome.

One of the courses on the Training Weekend looked at good design using PageMaker and other packages; the cover is one of the results, as are some of the dummy covers elsewhere in the magazine. If you would like to have a go at designing a cover to replace my rather funereal design then do send them in to me.

If you are writing for me then the ideal is to send me a disc produced using Word or Word for Windows but I can cope with any word processor that runs on a Nimbus (I think!). If you are using a 480z then I can take WordStar, Oxfordshire Write or plain text files and if what you are sending is short then a letter on good old fashioned paper is fine.

Finally, we pay for published articles at the rate of £5 per printed page (although all payments are at the Editor's discretion).

Advertising in the Magazine

Full and half page advertisements can be placed in the magazine and details can be obtained from the Advertising Manager. We also take classified ads and members may place free ads for surplus equipment in MicroMart.

Rates

Back Cover **£100** Inside Cover **£60** Full Page **£50** Half Page **£30**

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These rates assume black-on-white, camera ready copy. Please avoid dot-matrix output. Typesetting is charged at cost and is additional to the above rates. Classified ads must be pre-paid; cheques payable to RM User Group

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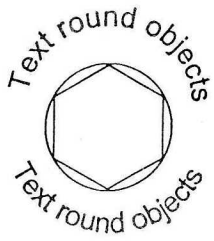
Desktop Publishing The Easy Way



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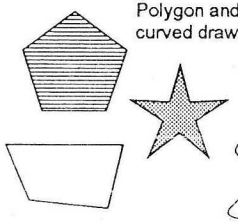

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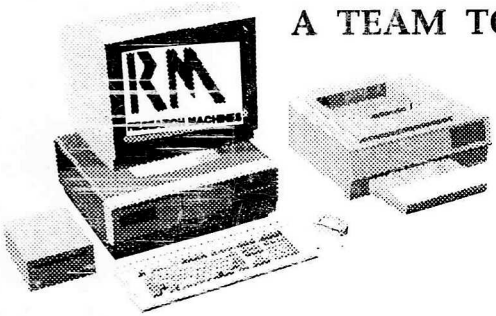

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